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Kennedy Warned on Data Leak

Reuter

The State Department yesterday warned Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) it might refuse to cooperate with him on Pakistan relief problems if he continued to make confidential diplomatic cables public.

Kennedy released cables warning of impending famine in East Pakistan during a hearing Thursday by the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugees, which he chairs.

State Department spokesman Charles Bray saying he had no idea how Kennedy obtained the cables, warned:

"It will be difficult for us to continue a constructive dialogue with the Committee and its members on the real human problems in East Pakistan if the chairman abuses our confidence."

Kennedy replied in a similar vein: "The Department of State makes it very difficult for Congress to carry on a constructive dialogue with the executive branch on the real human problems in East Pakistan when high officials of our government refuse to be candid, deliberately mislead and suppress information," Kennedy said.

"I am distressed that the administration finds it so easy to whitewash one of the greatest nightmares of modern times. Hopefully, the data now available on conditions in East Pakistan will finally mobilize our own government and the world community into the action necessary to head off mass starvation," Kennedy said.

Meanwhile Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.) accused the Nixon administration of misleading the Senate on U.S. military aid to Pakistan during suppression of the civil war there last spring.

Symington released portions of testimony at a closed session April 23 of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in which a State Department official denied that "any arms at all" were going to Pakistan and said "nothing is now scheduled for delivery."

The State Department later acknowledged that some U.S. weapons were shipped at the time under previously validated commercial export licenses, and Symington said other deliveries still are being made.